



Department of Commerce Occupational Safety and Health Report

March 2004

Occupational Safety and Health Report

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Introduction

This report provides an update to Department of Commerce (DOC) managers and employees on the progress of Departmental safety and occupational health initiatives and information regarding important Department-wide safety and occupational health issues for February 2004. The report also contains the latest available accident data for the Department. Section One of the report, Program Updates, provides updates on the safety and occupational health initiatives. Section Two, Injury Statistics, provides statistics regarding Department injuries, as reported to the Workers' Compensation Program for February 2004, and an analysis of the data to assist bureaus in focusing their safety efforts. Section Three, Survey Results, provides the March results from the on-line survey available through the intranet Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program Web Site.

Section One: Program Updates

On February 20, 2004, the Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Secretary for Administration, (CFO/ASA), Mr. Otto Wolff, signed a memorandum documenting the Department's goals to meet the White House Safety, Health and Return-to-Employment (SHARE) initiative. The SHARE initiative expands the "Federal Worker 2000" initiative and reinforces the Administration's interest in reducing costs and ensuring a safe and healthful workplace. SHARE is a three-year initiative, where each agency will annually measure and report its progress against baseline fiscal year (FY) 2003 data in the following areas:

The SHARE goals are to:

- reduce total case rates (TCR) by 3 percent per year;
- reduce lost-time injury and illness case rates (LTICR) 3 percent per year;
- improve the timeliness of filing notices of injuries and illnesses by 5 percent per year, and;
- reduce the rates of lost production days due to injury and illness by 1 percent each year.

Figure 1 displays the Departmental FY 2003 baseline and annual targets for the next 3 years. Progress on the SHARE initiative will be reported quarterly at the Departmental Occupational Safety and Health Council meetings.

	FY 03 Baseline	FY 04 Goal	FY 05 Goal	FY 06 Goal
Total Case Rates	1.46%	1.42%	1.38%	1.34%
Lost-Time Case Rates	0.70%	0.68%	0.66%	0.64%
Filing Notice Timeliness	36.1%	37.9%	39.8%	41.8%
Lost Production Days	20.9	20.7	20.4	20.2

Figure 1 Department of Commerce SHARE Targets Fiscal years 2004 through 2006.

The Department held its first monthly Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Corporate Board meeting on February 13, 2004. The group was formed to identify, develop, and monitor Departmental OSH programs and issues. The group will meet every second Friday of the month and is comprised of the Departmental Office of Occupational Safety and Health (OOSH), NOAA, Census, PTO and NIST; however, all bureaus and operating units are welcome to attend.

On February 27, 2004, the CFO/ASA signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Labor to review their Safety and Health Information Management System (SHIMS). If SHIMS functions within the Department's information technology infrastructure and architecture, the Department will realize improved and timely filing of occupational injury and illness claims, reduced administrative errors, appropriate provider health care to expedite return-to-employment, and reduced workers' compensation costs and lost time injury and illness rates. Ultimately, it will assist the Department in the compliance with both Public Law 91-596, the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970*, and the *Federal Employees Compensation Act*, as amended, 5 U.S.C. 8101 et. Seq., and the White House (SHARE) initiative.

Section Two: Injury Statistics

This section provides information on the total number of Departmental injuries for the past 5 years and analyzes the types of injuries across the Department. The information in Chart 2 reflects statistics through February 2004. Due to late submissions, processing limitations and to ensure the accuracy of the information, this section will continue to include information up to the

previous month. The data presented in the charts and tables are based upon Departmental Workers' Compensation Program records.

Incidence Rate: The incidence rate (IR) represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and is calculated as follows:

$$IR = \frac{N}{EH}(200,000)$$

N	=	Number of injuries and illnesses
EH	=	Total hours worked by all employees during the year ¹
200,000	=	Base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

¹ The total hours worked were determined based on the total number of employees and the average hours.

The Commerce Workers' Compensation Program keeps records on all injury and illness claims, including those that did not include any lost work time. An accounting of all incidents allows follow-up and more comprehensive program review by safety representatives. However, the incident rates from those records are not directly comparable, since they include many minor injuries and illnesses that are not considered "work-related" under Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for private industry. Injury rates may be skewed as safety awareness increases and employees are encouraged to report all injuries, causing total injury rates to increase despite improvements to safety. Using standardized OSHA recordable incident reporting helps to reduce inconsistent reporting. An OSHA recordable incident is a work-related injury or illness that resulted in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other licensed health care professional, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, loss of consciousness, or death.

Table 1A provides data that corresponds to the OSHA recordable injury criteria. The remaining tables and charts include data for all cases submitted to the Workers' Compensation Program.

Chart 1

Historical Total Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)

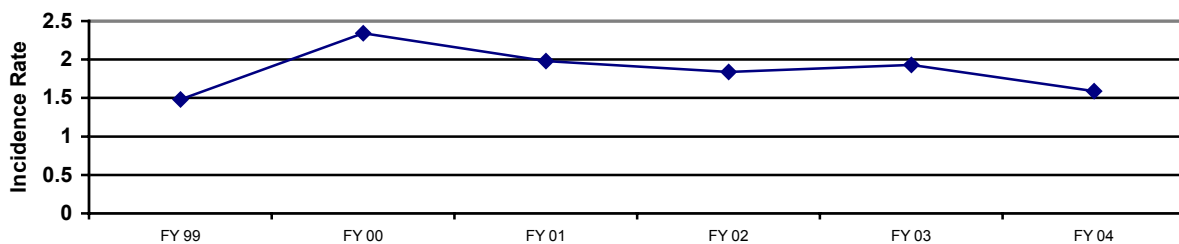
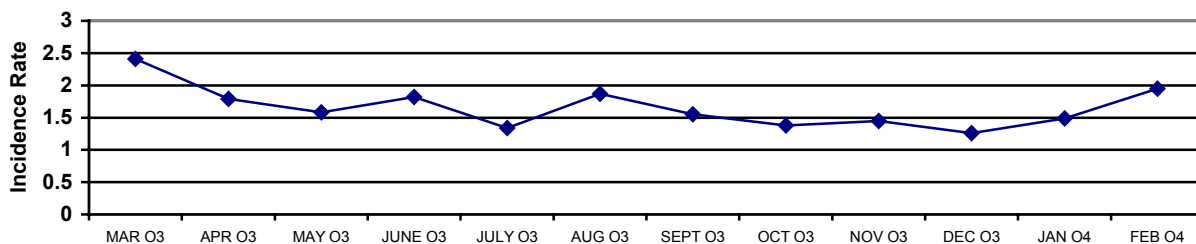


Chart 2

Monthly Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)



Major Findings include:

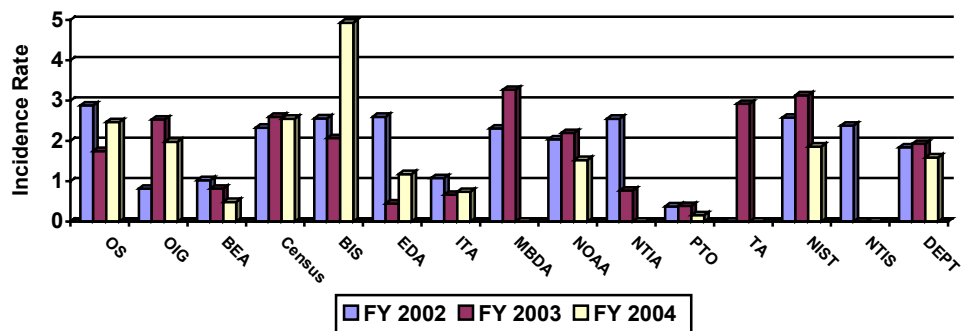
- **The FY 2004 Total Case Incidence Rate (TCIR) to date for Commerce is down from the rate for FY 2003 and FY 2002.** The TCIR is 1.59 (see Chart 1) for FY 2004, 1.93 for FY 2003, and 1.84 for FY 2002. A total of 224 total injuries were reported thus far for FY 2004 (see Table 1).
- **Of the larger bureaus (with more than 500 employees) the Bureau of Census and The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) had lower TCIRs to date for FY 2004**

when compared to FY 2003 (see Chart 3).

- **Of the smaller bureaus (i.e., bureaus with less than 500 employees), only ten injuries were reported to date in FY 2004.**
- **The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate (TRCIR) for Commerce is down from previous years. The TRCIRs for Commerce are 1.23 for FY 2004, 1.48 for FY 2003 and 1.60 for FY 2002 (see Table 1A).**

Chart 3

Total Case Incidence Rate Comparison (TCIR)



Types of Injuries: Many of the injuries reported can be prevented through improved safety awareness and proper maintenance. A Departmental and bureau focus on eliminating injuries and illnesses continues to be essential. Evaluating the types of claims submitted and structuring safety awareness training programs to eliminate accidents can assist in the mitigation of injuries and illnesses. Information on types of injuries is provided in Charts 4 and 5 and Tables 2 and 2A.

- **“Slips/Falls” injuries accounted for 31 percent of all injuries in FY 2003 (see Chart 4). The trend is lower when compared to 30 percent of injuries reported to date in FY 2004 (see Chart 5).** Many of the slips and falls reported in FY 2004 were attributed to slips and falls from ice on sidewalks and parking lots and melted ice in the entrances and hallways. Employees should use caution and be attentive to the condition of walking surfaces.

- **“Struck By” injuries accounted for 22 percent of those reported in FY 2003 (see Chart 4). To date, FY 2004 “struck by” injuries have increased to 27 percent (see Chart 5).** Most of the struck by injuries were caused by objects in the workplace not being used or stored correctly, due to office moves. Employees should be careful when using equipment around fellow employees and/or seek the assistance of Departmental movers.

“Exertion” injuries accounted for 25 percent of all injuries in the Department for FY 2003. During FY 2004 “exertion” injuries accounted for only 22 percent of all annual injuries to date demonstrating a reversing trend. To continue this trend OOSH request that employees use a cart to move heavy objects and/or seek the assistance of Departmental movers.

Chart 4
Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries for FY 2003

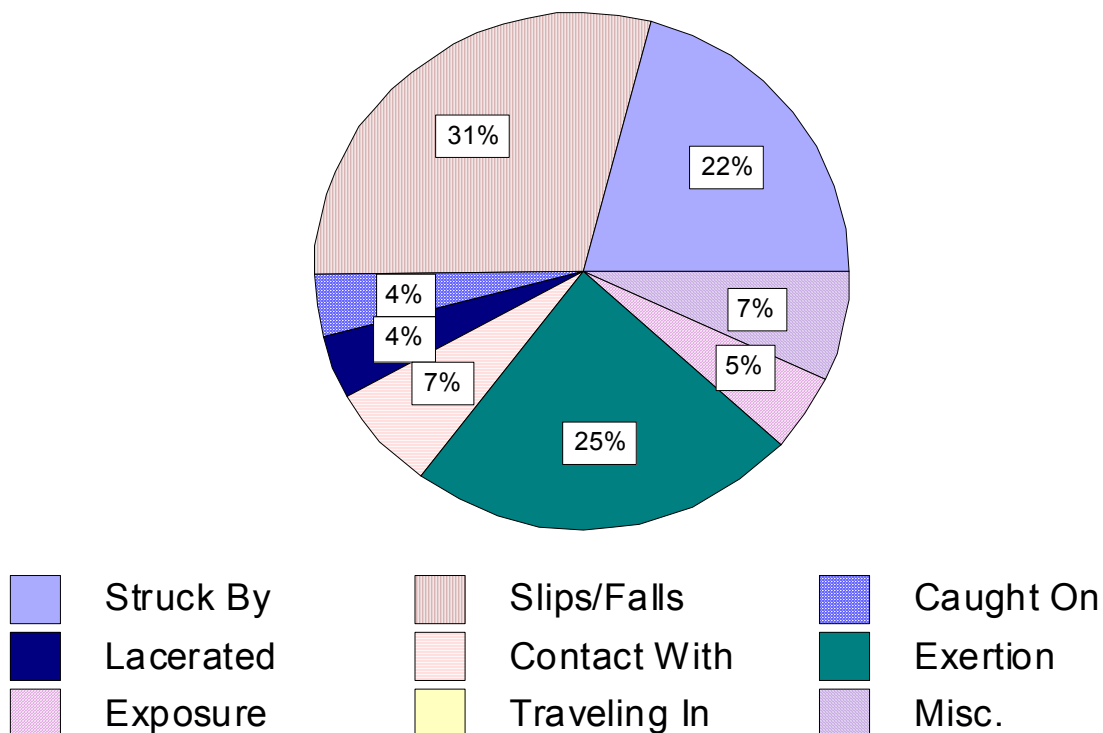


Chart 5
Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries “to date” for FY 2004

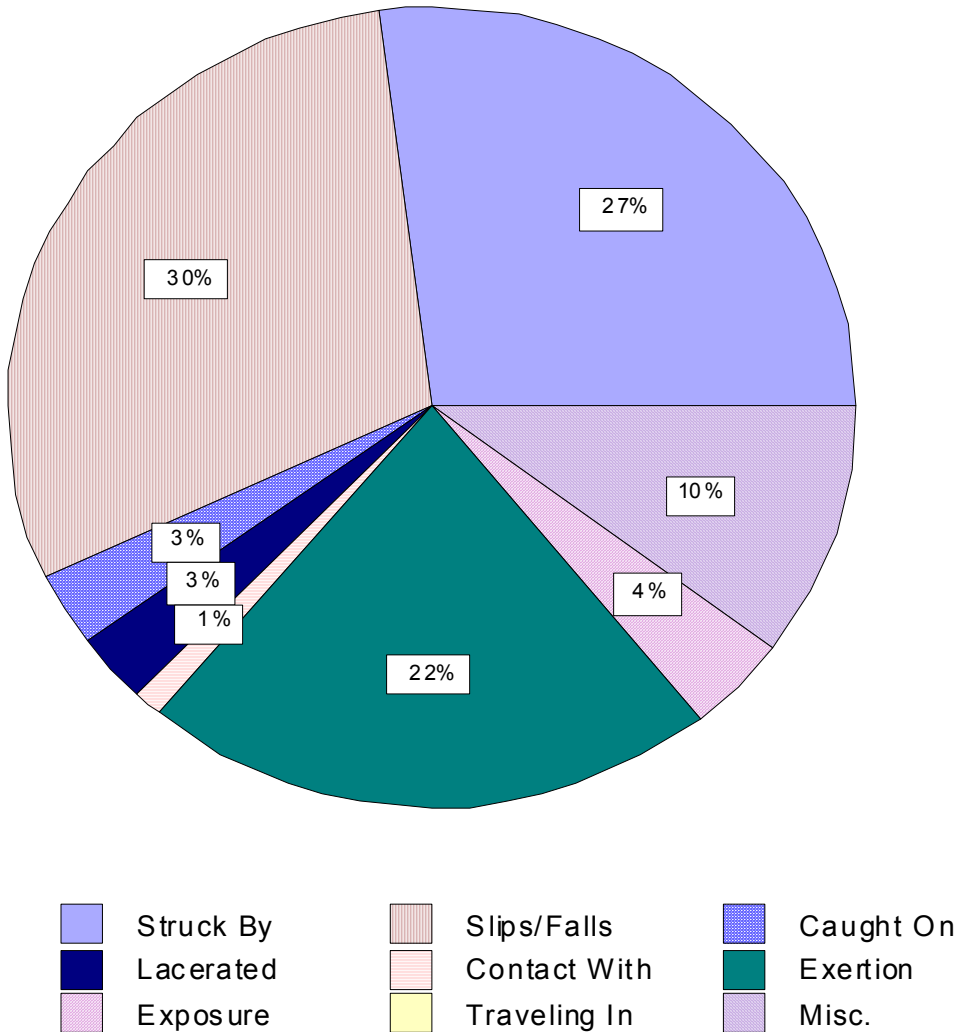


TABLE 1
TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATE* (TCIR)

Bureau	FY1999		FY2000		FY2001		FY2002		FY2003		January 2004		February 2004		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	35	3.94	22	2.47	23	2.88	14	1.75	1	1.46	5	7.71	8	2.47
Office of Inspector General	2	1.32	4	2.98	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	0	0	0	0	1	1.98
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	1	0.23	5	1.12	4	1.03	4	0.82	0	0	0	0	1	0.49
Bureau of the Census	311	1.04	383	2.83	393	2.41	241	2.33	252	2.60	20	2.47	21	2.57	104	2.55
Bureau of Industry and Security	11	3.08	15	4.06	9	2.44	9	2.56	7	2.07	2	7.02	2	7.04	7	4.93
Economic Development Administration	9	3.67	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	1	0.45	0	0	1	5.90	1	1.18
International Trade Administration	18	0.92	24	1.23	12	0.62	18	1.08	11	0.67	1	0.74	3	2.21	5	0.74
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	3	3.40	4	4.36	2	2.31	3	3.27	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	317	2.78	307	2.69	247	2.18	228	2.04	246	2.20	15	1.62	15	1.62	71	1.53
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	7	3.03	6	2.55	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	27	0.47	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	0	0	0	0	4	0.16
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	84	2.87	79	2.82	68	2.34	76	2.58	90	3.13	3	1.26	8	3.38	22	1.86
National Technical Information Service	6	2.61	4	2.15	1	0.52	4	2.38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	811	1.48	890	2.34	807	1.98	642	1.84	658	1.93	42	1.49	55	1.95	224	1.59
Decennial Census 2000	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

* Total Case Incidence Rate includes all cases reported to the Workers' Compensation Program.

** Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Case Incidence Rate.

TABLE 1A
TOTAL RECORDABLE CASE INCIDENCE RATE* (TRCIR)

Bureau	FY1999		FY 2000		FY2001		FY 2002		FY2003		January 2004		February 2004		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	30	3.38	17	1.91	22	2.75	12	1.50	1	1.46	4	6.17	7	2.16
Office of Inspector General	1	0.66	3	2.24	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	0	0	0	0	1	1.98
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	0	0	5	1.12	3	0.77	3	0.62	0	0	0	0	1	0.49
Bureau of the Census	288	0.96	345	2.55	332	2.04	212	2.05	184	1.90	17	2.10	19	2.33	80	1.96
Bureau of Industry and Security	10	2.80	13	3.52	8	2.17	9	2.56	7	2.07	2	7.02	1	3.52	5	3.52
Economic Development Administration	8	3.26	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	0	0	1	5.90	1	1.18
International Trade Administration	17	0.86	22	1.13	11	0.57	10	0.60	11	0.67	1	0.74	3	2.21	4	0.59
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	2	2.27	4	4.36	2	2.31	2	2.18	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	275	2.41	289	2.53	225	1.98	203	1.81	196	1.75	10	1.08	13	1.40	59	1.27
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	5	2.16	3	1.27	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	26	0.45	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	0	0	0	0	2	0.08
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	76	2.60	66	2.36	55	1.89	59	2.00	58	2.01	3	1.26	6	2.53	14	1.18
National Technical Information Service	5	2.18	4	2.15	1	0.52	3	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	732	1.34	809	2.13	702	1.72	557	1.60	503	1.48	34	1.21	47	1.67	174	1.23
Decennial Census 2000	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

* The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate includes only those injuries or illnesses that are reportable to OSHA under 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1904.

** Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Reported Case Incidence Rate.

Table 2

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU
AGENCIES WITH MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES
(Through February 2004)**

BUREAU	NOAA			CENSUS			NIST			PTO			ITA			OS			TOTAL
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	
Struck By/Against An Object	29	55	23	27	45	26	8	26	8	4	5	3	1	3	0	2	3	0	268
Falls/Slips	59	59	15	96	96	37	22	21	6	7	12	0	7	6	3	2	2	3	453
Caught On An Object	5	12	2	8	3	0	2	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	44
Cuts/Bites	26	5	0	19	19	7	9	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	91
Contact With An Object	19	5	0	11	5	1	6	0	0	6	4	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	61
Exertion/ Motion	64	73	17	37	51	21	17	22	4	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	8	2	324
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	9	9	1	6	18	8	3	3	0	1	0	0	6	1	0	12	0	1	78
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	10	0	0	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
Miscellaneous*	7	22	13	21	10	4	8	8	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	102
TOTAL	228	240	71	241	247	104	76	88	22	24	24	4	18	11	5	23	14	8	1448

* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

** Decennial Census claims were omitted to provide a clearer picture of injury trends

Table 2A
INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU
AGENCIES WITH LESS THAN 500 EMPLOYEES
(Through February 2004)

BUREAU	OIG			ESA/BEA			EDA			TA			NTIS			NTIA			MBDA			BIS			Total	
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04		
Struck By/Against An Object	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	10	
Falls/Slips	0	1	0	2	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	2	20	
Caught On An Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	
Cuts/Bites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Contact with an Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	5	
Exertion/ Motion	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	15
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Miscellaneous*	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	
Total	1	3	1	4	4	1	6	1	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	6	2	0	2	3	0	9	7	7	63	

* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

Section Three: Survey Results

We continue to receive comments through the Safety and Health Survey website. We are using employee comments to help shape a safety program responsive to employee issues and concerns. The website can be accessed through the OHRM homepage at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/>.

Safety Survey Statistics

We received 106 responses to March's survey. The following tables provide some data regarding the distribution of responses by bureau and general geographical area, as well as general safety impressions. The occupational safety and health survey provides feedback from the DOC community we serve and provides an additional insight on whether or not Departmental occupational safety and health programs and initiatives are active.

Table 3a
Safety and Health Survey
March Results

Have you experienced a safety lapse in your work area during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	87	82.86%
Yes	18	17.14%

Table 3b
Safety Survey
March Results

Have you noticed any safety improvements in your work area or in the Department as a whole during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	67	65.05%
Yes	36	34.95%

Table 3b indicates the continued perception that there is a lack of safety improvements within the Department. Over 87.24% of these concerns are associated with the Department's three major bureaus CENSUS, NOAA, and NIST respectively (see Table 3d).

On March 23, 2004, the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Survey working group (NOAA, Census, PTO and ITA) met to better measure Departmental OSH customer service.

The group created a modified and improved survey and a methodology proposal to better follow-up on employee safety and health concerns. The group is now working with the Departmental information technology specialist to develop the new survey consistent with the Office of Human Resources Management's vision to be customer focused and provide value.

Table 3c
Safety Survey
March Results by Geographic Area

Geographical Location		
State	Count	Percent
AK	3	2.86%
AL	1	0.95%
AZ	2	1.90%
CA	2	1.90%
CO	2	1.90%
DC	13	12.38%
FL	3	2.86%
HI	1	0.95%
ID	1	0.95%
IL	1	0.95%
MD	35	33.33%
MI	3	2.86%
MO	1	0.95%
NC	1	0.95%
NY	1	0.95%
PA	1	0.95%
SC	1	0.95%

Table 3d
Safety Survey
March Results by Bureau/Agency

Bureau Breakdown		
Bureau	Count	Percent
CENSUS	22	46.81%
ITA	2	4.26%
NIST	6	12.77%
NOAA	13	27.66%
OS	1	2.13%
PTO	3	6.38%